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ABSTRACT

Substantive arguments on school reform may be disguising a hidden debate over the process and politics of such reform--a debate over who should be responsible for educating our youth, the parties responsible for the current difficulties, and how severe these difficulties are. This document attempts to identify the attitudes that drive this hidden debate. Data were obtained through surveys that were mailed in 1992 to 500 teachers, 500 school board presidents, 750 superintendents, 250 principals, and 800 business executives. A total of 803 responses were received. Although educators and business executives showed consensus on educational goals, they disagreed acutely about evaluating education's performance, defining its problems, and supporting solutions to those problems. First, business executives believed that schools fail to accomplish key educational goals. In contrast, educators assessed school performance as at least fair on all seven goals. Second, educators were much more likely than executives to say that the schools are overburdened and that money is an important problem. Finally, teachers and executives supported the creation of national education standards but faulted administrative waste. However, administrators (principals and superintendents) joined executives in downplaying problems of overcrowded classrooms and low teacher salaries. Nine figures and eight tables are included. (LMI)

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